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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 5TH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 23 September 1991, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. PENNANEACH (Vice-President)	(Togo)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI (President)	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. ROGERS (Vice-President)	(Belize)

- Address by Mr. Bailey Olter, President of the Federated States of Micronesia

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Di Tella (Argentina)

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- General debate [9] (continued)

Address by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway

Statements made by

Mr. Velayati (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Mr. Evans (Australia)

Mr. Solana Morales (Mexico)

Mr. Kalpage (Sri Lanka)

Mr. Van Dunem (Angola)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. BAILEY OLTER, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Bailey Olter, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Federated States of Micronesia,
His Excellency Mr. Bailey Olter, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President OLTER: Mr. President, it is my high honour to address you today both as the Chairman of the South Pacific Forum and as President of my country, the Federated States of Micronesia, which was admitted only a few days ago to membership in this body. Given the key role that this great Organization is playing in the epochal state of world affairs, it is strong testimony to the living principles of the Charter that the Assembly would pause now to allow one of its newest Members to speak.

First of all, Mr. President, for the South Pacific Forum and for my country, I wish to refer to the great sense of anticipation brought forth by your election to head this, the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Your experience and high standing have made you a most fortunate choice to provide the critical leadership that will enable us all to deal effectively with so many issues which, now more than ever before, can be addressed by this body with a high expectation. You have our warm congratulations and our best wishes.

(President Olter)

I wish also to express thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, as he continues each day, through his diligent service, to enrich the life of every citizen of the world. Today, the United Nations has emerged, during some of the most challenging times in all history, as a stronger and more dynamic Organization than at any time since its founding. The Secretary-General's unstinting and selfless devotion to the advancement of the principles of the Charter will never be forgotten.

The Federated States of Micronesia is especially honoured to have been admitted to membership at the opening of the forty-sixth session along with six other nations and to have been able to share with them the sense of joy and fulfilment which pervaded that historic day. Thus, along with our Pacific colleagues of the Forum, we extend warm congratulations to our neighbour and former Trusteeship partner, the Republic of the Marshall Islands. For the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea, we rejoice that they have been able to take this long-awaited step together. To the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, their entry here brings a dramatic end to more than 40 years of longing for the restoration of their sovereignty.

We hope that the simultaneous attainment of membership by such a large group will encourage yet more nations, both within our Pacific region and elsewhere, to become Members and bring the goal of universality closer to ultimate attainment.

The countries of the South Pacific Forum share with the rest of the world deep thankfulness for the many historic victories of the forces of freedom and democracy during the past year. The world is truly moving into an era of government founded upon respect for human dignity. No longer need we think of the free world as only half of humanity. The prospect of seeing, within our

(President Olter)

lifetimes, the establishment of the new world order that seemed, throughout most of this century, to be beyond attainment must inspire us all with determination to help those who need special consideration for transitional needs and to make sure that the momentum under way is not lost. This very Organization is now, more than ever, the principal banner behind which the ultimate victory of humankind will be attained.

The Federated States of Micronesia was honoured to host the 22nd annual meeting of the South Pacific Forum in Palikir, our capital on the beautiful island of Pohnpei, on 29 and 30 July. The Heads of Government of the 15 member countries within our region reviewed progress and made decisions on a number of issues considered important to the region, which were generally of a political, economic or environmental nature. I shall mention, briefly, some of the subjects that were discussed.

Regrettably, the Forum noted that its long-standing deep concern about nuclear-weapon testing in the region cannot yet be put aside. From our perspective, one of the lessons of the recent Middle East conflict is that each and every one of the leading nations of the world must set a strong example if the impulses of some to engage in nuclear-weapon development in support of their unworthy ambitions is to be suppressed. For that reason, we welcome the decision by France, a leading Member of this body, to become a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to sign and ratify the convention of the South Pacific regional environmental programme.

We still await, however, a cessation of their testing of nuclear weapons in our region. As Forum Chairman, I cannot overstress the determination of all the members to persevere with, and wherever possible expand, our efforts to reach the consciences of those who seem willing to visit the potentially

(President Olter)

devastating consequences of nuclear testing on faraway island people but are unwilling to carry out such activities within their own homelands.

On a happier note, the Forum was gratified that its earlier concerns communicated to the United States, regarding destruction of chemical weapons at Johnston Atoll, were not ignored. While we were not able to prevent a European stockpile of these weapons from being transferred to Johnston Atoll for future destruction, we remain opposed to that activity within our region. President Bush personally gave a commitment to our Heads of Government, at a summit gathering in Honolulu, that no further stocks would be brought to Johnston Atoll and agreed to permit monitoring of the activity by a Forum scientific mission.

We thank the United States for its recognition of our concern, and hope that the point has been made effectively that our region cannot be considered by the larger nations as a convenient empty space for the disposal of toxic and hazardous waste, chemicals and radioactive materials. In that regard, the Forum also looks forward to a strengthening of the London Dumping Convention at the next consultative meeting, in 1992.

The most immediate and serious environmental threat to the region was recognized to be climate change brought on, or intensified, by the acts of mankind, in particular by emissions of industrially-generated greenhouse gases. The Forum stressed the importance for the international community of developing, and adhering to, a framework convention on climate change containing commitments to immediate and significant reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions by the industrialized countries, and of committing all countries to strive for greater energy efficiency through, among other things, the development of alternative energy sources.

(President Olter)

The Forum further noted with appreciation that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on a Framework Convention acknowledged the need to address the special situation of low-lying, vulnerable small island States, which will be among the first to suffer adverse effects, or even possible extinction, as a consequence of sea-level rise caused by global warming.

On another environmental issue of great magnitude, the Forum welcomed recent progress towards achieving a complete ban on the destructive practice of drift-net fishing. The Forum hopes that the Convention for the Prohibition of Fishing with Long Drift Nets in the South Pacific will be effective. The Convention, which entered into force on 17 May 1991, calls for faithful observance of General Assembly resolutions 44/225 and 45/197. It is also hoped that this body will not diminish its vigilance, which has so far contributed greatly to the movement towards the eradication of drift-net fishing.

In economic matters, the Forum recognizes the need for its member countries to participate more actively in international trade forums. With regard to the current growth and strengthening of regional trading blocs, we hope that these will evolve in harmony with, and not displace, the processes of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. We join other members of the international community in underlining the importance of a just multilateral trading system, in particular for the development prospects of poorer countries. We call for an expeditious and successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations.

The Forum is, of course, deeply committed in its support for the self-determination of all peoples, including peoples in the Pacific region. We anticipate great progress during the International Decade for the

(President Olter)

Eradication of Colonialism, and call upon all remaining colonial Powers meanwhile to establish an effective framework within which the human rights, including the right to self-determination, of people living under colonialism are protected.

A particular focus of Forum attention is, and has been, on the developments in New Caledonia, where a group of Forum-country Ministers recently completed a visit to observe the situation of the indigenous Kanak population. While more concrete action is encouraged, the Forum recognizes that the French authorities are pursuing positive measures to promote equitable political, economic and social development in the Territory. It is to be hoped that these and other measures will create an atmosphere in which a peaceful evolution to self-determination will occur.

That concludes my statement as Chairman of the South Pacific Forum. I make the balance of these remarks on behalf of my country, the Federated States of Micronesia.

Many peoples and countries of the world today live in better conditions, and can have hopes for a brighter future, as a direct result of the work of this Organization. Even so, I would venture to suggest that few others besides the citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia can point to the long and tangible encouragement from this body that my people have received, virtually throughout the entire period that the Charter has been in effect. Permit me, then, Mr. President, on this day to give special recognition and thanks to the members of the Trusteeship Council, all past and present members of the Security Council, the Secretariat, Governments and all individuals who throughout the years worked so tirelessly at our side to bring about the eventual achievement of our goal of self-determination. Forgive me for

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singling out one particular member in this regard, but the United States, as our former Administering Authority, must receive unqualified praise for its singular commitment and its generosity.

In years to come, whenever the people of the Federated States of Micronesia reflect upon the origins of our country, we will be grateful that the United Nations was present early on our journey, to embrace us with the great principle of the Charter respecting the right of all peoples to self-determination. Now, however, we are no longer mere objects of this Organization's spiritual and material support. We have willingly subscribed to the Charter and accepted all the obligations attendant thereto. It is incumbent on us to make repayment in some part for those long years of the Organization's devotion to our advancement in the only way that we can - by devoting ourselves to becoming an effective Member country and discharging faithfully our obligations to make positive contributions. We make that pledge.

Because the principles which brought our people together under our Constitution are so closely related to the principles of this body's Charter, we have naturally found ourselves in strong support of the expressions and actions of the United Nations, particularly those directed towards the enhancement of human rights and the suppression of armed conflicts. Even on our remote Pacific islands we cheered when the Berlin Wall came down. We felt repugnance at the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Today we join in calling upon the Government of Iraq to comply fully with all United Nations resolutions. Along with all other peoples, we are deeply relieved by the apparent end of the cold war, but, even as we applaud the momentous events of self-determination unfolding in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, we feel empathy for the

(President Oiter)

difficult choices being faced by so many courageous peoples, and sympathy for their hardships. We pray for an early end to the tragic civil conflict in Yugoslavia. We also pray for the earliest possible release of all hostages held in the Middle East, taking heart from the unrelenting efforts of this body and the Secretary-General.

(President Olter)

But, because this is the first time my country has taken part in the general debate, and because we associate ourselves with my earlier remarks on behalf of the South Pacific Forum, I will confine myself now to enlarging upon a single topic mentioned earlier, one which is of particular concern; that is, the issue of the world's co-ordinated response to the consequences flowing from climate changes brought on by activities of mankind.

We are thankful that the Members of this body had the foresight to convene the historic negotiations now in progress relating to environment and development and to climate change, and look forward to the signing of effective instruments on those subjects next year, in Brazil. Even prior to our becoming a Member of the United Nations, we were given the opportunity to participate in those processes thanks to the Assembly's recognition that mankind's concern with the outcome is truly universal. In that regard, we welcomed the decision to seat the delegation of the Cook Islands at the negotiations on climate change just completed in Nairobi, the wisdom of which was confirmed by the valuable contributions of their representative at those meetings.

Like a number of countries in the Pacific and elsewhere, the Federated States of Micronesia is an oceanic State comprising small islands within a sovereign territory approaching the size of the continental United States. Our ocean waters, therefore, are vast. Even so, we do not think of ourselves as small islands separated by great empty spaces. The ocean has been, and always will be, our great provider. Its bounty alone is our principal resource for economic survival, and we are conscious of our need to live in constant harmony with it. Until recently, we believed we were too few in number for our actions to affect the great ocean, but while much about it is

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not yet understood, we have come to realize that the ocean has many responses to man's activities around and upon it.

Two of those responses are brought about by ocean warming due to climate change and affect the very habitability of our islands. They are sea-level rise and alteration of marine biological diversity. Both have been recognized by the scientists participating in the intergovernmental panel on climate change, and both must be addressed effectively if our country is to survive and develop.

As the oceans are warmed and polar icecaps are subjected to melting due to unnatural concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, ocean levels will rise. I am not exaggerating when I say that islands and low-lying coastal regions in many parts of the world which are now home to millions of people would first be rendered uninhabitable and would, ultimately, disappear completely. No amount of assistance or technology transfer would prevent that outcome, and it could begin to occur within our lifetime. In some reports, migration has been mentioned as a strategy for adaptation, but the world's experience to date with forced migration of peoples has been uniformly tragic. The only answer is to control the activities that will cause the seas to rise.

Of almost equal significance to island peoples is the known fact that ocean warming will adversely impact on a wide range of marine organisms, including the corals which are the basis for our reef fisheries and our defence against the violence of the open ocean. In addition, stocks and movements of commercial ocean fish, on which virtually all our plans for significant development are based, would be subjected to changes which the

(President Alter)

scientists described as profound but which cannot be precisely identified on the basis of current knowledge.

It is clear that small island States are indeed in the front line of countries in the world which are facing dire consequences of climate change brought on by man-induced global warming - consequences which would flow from the impact on our great provider - the ocean.

I must go further and refer to a major reason why the warming of the ocean is of concern, not only to low-lying islands but to the entire world. It is that the ocean waters and many of its living creatures, such as corals, are known to be a huge storehouse of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. We know that warming causes those gases to be released from the oceans into the atmosphere, but we are not yet able to project the process with scientific certainty. Given the fact that the Pacific Ocean alone comprises almost one third of the entire surface of the Earth, the risks associated with man's triggering such release through unbridled activities on land are too staggering to ignore. The existence of that and other related oceanic mechanisms is not a matter of speculation. They are a scientific reality and for that reason the interests of mankind dictate that the development of our comprehensive understanding of them be given high priority in the allocation of resources committed by the framework convention.

As an ocean island country, we believe it is our place and our responsibility to call attention to the key role of the oceans in our global environment. We, along with other island countries, have undertaken to do so at the sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and, with the support of this body, I am optimistic that the framework convention on climate change will make due provision for this critical consideration.

(President Olter)

In conclusion, I wish once more to refer to our joy and our humility at being permitted to speak on this occasion. We did not lightly undertake the responsibilities of membership in this world body. But though we are small, we earnestly hope that the voice of the Federated States of Micronesia will earn respect in years to come for having been raised constructively in the advancement of the Charter and in the work of this, the greatest cooperative undertaking in the history of the world.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Bailey Olter, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. DI TELLA (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly for this session. I have no doubt that, like your predecessor, you will guide its proceedings to a very successful conclusion.

We extend our welcome to the new States Members of our Organization - the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands - which widen and strengthen its universal framework. We also welcome the entry into membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, countries which have regained their liberty after the long night that followed upon the infamous Molotov-Von Ribbentrop Treaty. Of course, Argentina was among the first nations to recognize their independence.

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

We would also like to congratulate and thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the way in which he has fulfilled his sensitive mandate. We are extremely proud that he is a Latin American. His term of office has been the most active ever in our Organization's history, and he discharged it masterfully. No doubt, his thoughts and recommendations will be valuable contributions to the future of the United Nations.

The end of the cold war has established a completely new international framework. In a world from which conflicts will undoubtedly not vanish, but where the worst threats have been dispelled, the United Nations has an invaluable role to play as guarantor for these promising realities. Argentina is committed to supporting the endeavours of the United Nations. In that context, we reaffirm our support of the system of collective security enshrined in the Charter and in particular to the central role of the Security Council in maintaining peace.

My country is building a sound political and economic stability, thanks to which we Argentines can now make long-term plans. The Argentina of today is doing very well in a process that began in 1983 and has been solidly entrenched since 1989. We are living through profound transformations, and it is no mere coincidence that this should be taking place at a time when the entire world is strengthening the foundations of a new world order.*

The changes in Argentina are the outcome of three serious crises over the past 15 years. The best thing that a country can do is to avoid crises; the next best is to learn from them, and that is what my country has done. The restoration of democracy was accelerated by the human rights crisis and the Malvinas crisis.

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* Mr. Pennaneach (Togo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

Finally, the transformation of our foreign policy came as a result of our realizing that our isolationist attitude of past decades was ineffective and led to confrontation. The crisis of the State-controlled economic model in 1989 produced serious instances of hyperinflation which led us to a radical change of course in our economic thinking and to today's openness and stability.

The crises in hyperinflation, foreign policy and human rights together generated a total renewal of the country's internal and external economic and political profiles. Argentina has stepped firmly into a new era. This is a process that coincides with deep-rooted trends affecting the entire planet and many Members of the United Nations. In our case, the key to this evolution is that the strengthening of freedom and democracy go hand in hand with economic reform and openness. We can say with great satisfaction that the legitimacy of these reforms was reaffirmed by the results of the elections held recently in my country on 8 September, when the principal political forces coincided in supporting the policy of economic stability.

Since 1989, Argentina's foreign policy has been marked by our will to join in the new international order, by the defence of our interests and by our international reaffirmation of democratic values. Furthermore, as a Latin American country we aspire to the consolidation of a greater Latin American nation ecompassing the entire region. In the heart of all Latin Americans is a kind of nostalgia for such a greater homeland. Our joining in this new order has been affirmed by a number of specific measures, such as our active support of the Security Council during the Gulf crisis, which included the sending of military personnel; our current contribution of observers to various peace-keeping operations; and our explicit support for the processes of change in Eastern Europe.

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

Additional proof of our willingness to cooperate and our commitment to international peace and security can be seen in our excellent and mutually beneficial current relations with the United Kingdom. This has occurred under the umbrella of a formula agreed upon with the British Government that protects the inalienable sovereign rights of Argentina over the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands.

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

Concerning this issue I reiterate that the Argentine Government believes that the new climate between the two countries should also - at the right time - facilitate the resumption of negotiations regarding sovereignty as this General Assembly has repeatedly requested.

The encouraging process of integration between Argentina and Brazil has great relevance, due to the intense efforts involved and its transforming consequences for our countries and the region. Last March the two States, together with Paraguay and Uruguay, signed a treaty in Asunción for the establishment of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), which should be set up by 31 December 1994. We have no doubt that the Asunción Treaty will come to be for our region what the Rome Treaty was for the Community. What we are saying is not a small matter, but nor is what is at stake.

The magnitude of this regional economic area becomes evident if we consider that the population of the participating countries is 190 million and their gross domestic product (GDP) more than $400 billion, that is, 36 per cent of the GDP and 51 per cent of the population of Latin America and the Caribbean.

At the same time, we consider that the Americas Initiative formulated by the President of the United States is a positive proposal. It encourages us to work together with solidarity and on equitable grounds and on the basis of concrete facts such as trade, the debt and investment. The framework agreement recently signed in Washington between the United States and the emerging MERCOSUR is also very promising for a future of fruitful cooperation in our subregional relations with that country.

Thanks to important agreements recently signed with Chile, it will soon be possible to say that there are no longer any points of disagreement in the

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

demarcation of the long boundary between Argentina and its sister country, and this opens up the possibility of carrying on an intensive programme of economic cooperation, which is crucial for both nations.

With Brazil we have also made significant progress in other sensitive areas. Last August our Presidents signed an agreement on the use of nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes. Negotiations are also going on between the two countries on the one hand and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the other, for a safeguards agreement that will enable IAEA to monitor nuclear facilities in Argentina and Brazil in order to verify that our nuclear programmes are exclusively for peaceful purposes.

In this respect, I should like to reaffirm that the Argentine space programme is solely one of peace and cooperation, fully transparent and subject to the existing international safeguards. That is why we have decided to adhere to the missile technology control regime.

Together with Brazil and Chile we have taken the historic step of pledging not to manufacture chemical or biological weapons. In this very concrete way our countries definitively exclude the possibility that the southern tip of the Americas might be affected by the consequences of the irrational use of scientific progress. In this context, I wish to reaffirm my country's firm commitment to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction from the Latin American region.

I explicitly reaffirm our commitment to the respect of human rights and political pluralism both within and outside our borders. The new era which began with the end of the cold war is characterized precisely by the triumph of these political ideals and of the market economy as its most efficient instrument. The consolidation of these new and positive circumstances demands

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

steadfast resistance to any abandoning of principles. The Argentine Government refuses to be an accomplice to the justification, under any pretext, of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Economic and social rights are no less important than civil and political ones, but the attainment of the former cannot be used as a pretext for denying the exercise of the latter. The imposing of conditions for the effective exercise of human rights has been resorted to time and again by non-democratic regimes.

The Argentine Government also emphasizes the right of the international community to point the finger at those responsible for gross and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Argentine Government therefore takes an active part in the Commission on Human Rights and has ratified the Inter-American Pact on Human Rights. At the last Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), held in Santiago, Chile, we signed a declaration of multilateral commitment to the defence of democracy. There is only one real lacuna in the efforts for the consolidation of the Latin American region. My Government is eager to ensure that Cuba will very soon, in peace, return to the international community, emphasizing a market economy and the defence of human rights, issues that are already being addressed by their former colleagues of Eastern Europe.

Our recent withdrawal from the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries reflects our view that the end of the cold war and the establishment of a new international order have deprived the very concept of non-alignment of meaning. It reflects also our frustration at the movement's refusal to commit itself unequivocally on matters such as those mentioned above, which go beyond the opinion and behaviour of many of their member countries.

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

We are firmly committed to the protection of the environment and to the fight against drug trafficking. These are areas in which, for the sake of higher principles linked with the interests of mankind, the international community has the right to exercise effective control. Here we note with particular satisfaction the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to take place next year in the sister republic of Brazil.

On the other hand, Argentinian foreign policy is at the service of the Argentine people, and is inspired by democratic ethics. For decades the Argentine Republic suffered a constant and growing impoverishment, the main victims of which were its people. Confrontational foreign policies brought about high costs, which were suffered above all by the poor and the needy. My Government has chosen to eliminate useless confrontation from its foreign policy because it considers that such confrontation is counterproductive to its own interests, as well as to those of the new international order. This is an instance in which morality converges with pragmatism, and in which defending legitimate material interests is equivalent to defending principles.

At the same time we emphatically demand that an end be put to the protectionist practices that are distorting the international markets for agricultural products through production support measures and export subsidies. These policies do not have a rational economic foundation either for the countries that apply them or for us. On the one hand they do not allow efficient producers to place their agricultural exports and on the other it punishes the contributors and consumers and the largely urban sectors of those countries which implement these policies of protection. Furthermore, these policies promote serious ecological degradation, which is brought about

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

by these production methods and the excessive use of chemicals, which cannot be sustained by the environment. That leads to a greater environmental imbalance than the very serious destruction of the tropical forests. On the other hand, there is a flagrant asymmetry in trade practices that tolerate subsidies to agricultural exports while banning those to industrial exports. Only very rich countries could apply such mistaken policies, but even they jeopardize global productivity and risk their future competitiveness by applying such policies.

We are convinced that the elimination of all subsidies will be beneficial for all nations. We will continue our struggle in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and in agreement with the other members of the Cairns Group until we achieve this goal. We expect the clear support of the United States and the understanding of the Community as regards the need for reform. The future, no less than that of international economic cooperation, depends on our ability to find a multilateral solution to these problems in order to avoid destructive trade wars and safeguard the positive spirit of Bretton Woods.

In order to create firm economic links with the Western European countries, Argentina has signed agreements on the promotion and mutual guarantee of investments, and is willing to negotiate agreements for the elimination of double taxation, which will facilitate the normal flow of capital in both directions. At the same time, we have rescheduled our debt with the Paris Club.

(Mr. Di Tella, Argentina)

We look forward to more flexible interaction with the European Economic Community. We trust that the framework agreement signed a little over a year ago and the agreement signed in April 1991 on the establishment of a delegation in Buenos Aires will strengthen relations and facilitate exchanges.

I should like to refer to my country's position regarding three specific issues - aspects of the current world situation that are of particular interest to my Government.

Among the many positive changes that have taken place in the world, we are encouraged by the South African Government's programme of political, social and economic reforms, aimed at dismantling the unfair system of apartheid completely and for ever and at paving the way for the building of a new South Africa. That is why we have decided to re-establish diplomatic relations with that State. This step is one indication of our commitment, together with the international pressure, to the establishment of a fair and democratic society in South Africa, based on the principle of one man, one vote and on the total elimination of racial discrimination.

On the other hand, it is a matter of concern to us that, in spite of countless efforts and steps forward towards a peaceful solution to many regional conflicts, the international community has not yet found a just, peaceful and definitive solution to the question of Palestine. We support the call of the United States for the convening of a peace conference in the region, aimed at achieving a satisfactory and final solution to the various issues at stake, including the restitution of occupied territories and recognition of the right to secure and internationally recognized boundaries. In this context, the Argentine Government, as was stated last year in the General Assembly, believes that the time has come to leave behind offensive language based on analogies beween Zionism and racism. That would help to

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create a climate of agreement that would facilitate the current diplomatic initiatives.

In regard to our Latin American region, I wish to express the Argentine Republic's support for the ongoing efforts to reach a definitive solution to the conflict involving El Salvador. I wish to reaffirm my Government's recognition of the role of the Secretary-General and that of his Special Representative. I wish to note also the positive attitude of the Government of El Salvador in the search for consensus based on peace, justice and the consolidation of democracy in that sister nation. We valued particularly President Cristiani's visit to Argentina this month.

All of mankind's hopes for the remaining years of this century converge in assigning a key role to the United Nations. In that sense, 1991 has been a revealing and decisive year in overcoming skepticism. The Security Council, in particular, has shown its effectiveness, thanks to the cooperation born of the end of the cold war.

It is up to us to see that these positive trends continue to be strengthened. The United Nations is undoubtedly the proper forum to discuss problems and to find solutions and ensure their implementation. Accordingly, we must commit ourselves to the most stringent respect for our Charter and to the most united and enthusiastic defence of the spirit that it embodies.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

ADDRESS BY MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I have great pleasure in welcomng the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Mrs. BRUNDTLAND (Norway): It is indeed a pleasure to congratulate you, Mr. President, upon your election to this high office at a time of such great achievement and promise for the United Nations. It is also a great pleasure to see the new Member States present and particularly to welcome Norway's close neighbours the Baltic States, which have now regained their rightful place among the free and independent countries.

We stand before a new horizon and a changing political map. Our abilities to cope with a wide spectrum of common concerns are greatly improved by the convergence of interests of major Powers and between the North and the South.

Peace, democracy, environment and development - these are the core issues of our common agenda for the twenty-first century. These are not separate issues; they are closely linked. Working together, not against each other, we can have a vision of a better-managed world, of better governance, and of global adherence to the fundamental principles of democracy, to market economies with a strong social dimension and a human face, and to the understanding that economic and social development must be sustainable.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

The profound changes in the Soviet Union are among the four or five most decisive events of this century. Soon we hope to see 700 million people in Europe alone enjoying democracy and common economic market conditions. The signed arms reduction treaties must now be ratified without delay in order to consolidate the political East-West acquis and to accelerate the integration of the East into the world economy.

We firmly believe that stability and economic growth in the Soviet Union are essential, for the people of the Soviet Union, for Europe and for the world. In order to support the ongoing transition and to support the integration of the Soviet Union into the world economy, we urgently need both economic and democratic lifelines between the Union, the Republics and the democratic world. We cannot just sit and wait for the situation to become more orderly. The greatest risk we can run is to take no risks at all.

The United Nations must adapt to the changing world. We who as a matter of policy and conviction have always supported the United Nations also have the foremost duty to stress the need for continued United Nations reform. We need a more dynamic, better focused and securely financed United Nations which sets the priorities based on present and future needs. This cannot be a General Assembly doing business as usual.

Having recently withstood severe tests, the United Nations now can proceed with confidence and assertiveness. Let us imagine what it would have been like to assemble here in New York in September 1991 if Iraqi occupation forces had still been in Kuwait. What kind of credibility would any discussion of peace-making, peace-keeping and conflict prevention have had if we had failed to counter such flagrant aggression? But the United Nations rose to the challenge and brought us closer to the collective system for international peace and security envisaged in the Charter. Any potential

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aggressor must now think more than twice, and all countries can be more secure with the major Powers now working together - not against each other - here in the Security Council.

The Security Council is and must remain the foremost guardian of our collective security. To meet the present and future challenges it is important that the full weight of the Security Council be brought to bear.

Similarly, the high office of the Secretary-General has clearly defined responsibilities. His role in preventive diplomacy should be further strengthened. We must give him and the United Nations the means as well as the clout. Nothing less will serve us.

An essential part of the security problem is the arms culture which we have allowed to flourish. How could we allow the enormous clandestine build-up of power in some countries? Governments and the private sector alike are responsible. Governments have failed to establish the necessary international rules, and the private sector has exploited that vacuum in pursuit of profit.

Never again can we allow dictators to arm for aggression. Irresponsible regimes must be denied access to weapons of mass destruction. We must have a world-wide ban on chemical weapons and limit trade in arms. We support the idea of a register of all arms sales. The United Nations needs to give this issue top priority. If the five permanent members of the Security Council, which are the principal manufacturers and exporters of arms, can cooperate also in this important field, we have a chance to improve the situation.

In too many countries we see military budgets of astonishing proportions. The international community is likely to examine such national priorities. How can there be any justification for allocating 10 per cent, 15 per cent or even higher percentages of State budgets to military spending

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when education and health receive far less, and when the future of those countries lies not in arming but in educating a healthy population?

We must address issues of peace in a precautionary manner. True conflict prevention means vigorously addressing all the underlying causes of human conflict and distress.

Above all we must be uncompromising in our determination to alleviate poverty. Look at sub-Saharan Africa, where the vast majority of the population is being robbed of any hope of a decent future. Just look at the appalling gaps between the opulent wealthy and the most miserable poor. It is appalling that hundreds of millions of people live on less than a dollar a day. How can we live with a situation where 40,000 children die each day of malnutrition and disease?

We must break that vicious circle. Poverty is both a cause and an effect of the devastating environmental breakdowns in many developing countries, which threaten vital life-support systems on which future generations depend. We must break the deadlock of poverty causing large-scale migration and ever-increasing numbers of refugees.

If we fail to resolve the poverty issue now, our problems will multiply. The population explosion is likely to double or triple our numbers, with 90 per cent of that increase occurring in developing countries.

Debt relief is necessary. How can developing countries make the investments needed to provide health, education and basic amenities for such growing populations when today they are suffocating under crushing burdens of debt and when financial flows are going from poor countries to the rich?

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

Creating economic growth in developing countries is essential, and the concept of growth must be adjusted to the requirements of sustainable development. People must have a real chance to acquire the means whereby they can make their own choices and take responsibility for their own future. We must create a world economy in which all countries can participate on an equal footing.

To get out of the crisis, we need to improve developing countries' access to the world market. A striking illustration has been offered by the World Bank: developing countries would have the benefit of some $ 55 billion if they were granted unrestricted access to the markets of the industrialized countries. This is equivalent to what they now receive in aid.

The Uruguay Round is vital and must be successfully concluded. World trade must be governed by common rules. The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) must be the stronghold of trade discipline. Enforcing mechanisms are important, particularly for weaker parties.

Moreover, we need coordinated macroeconomic policies and the advisory roles of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

While economic policies are important, all evidence supports the assertion that social development depends on democracy and on pluralism. Alone, even the best economic policies will not suffice unless the human potential of a healthy and educated population can be unleashed and unless people can participate in political life without fear.

Aid will remain important, in particular for Africa. Many donor countries can increase the quantity of their aid and improve its quality. I feel I can point to this since Norway maintains its development assistance in excess of 1 per cent of GDP, the highest in the world. Yet, aid alone can

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never solve the poverty problem. Aid must be designed to help in building sound economies and in implementing policies of social reform.

In less than nine months, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be held in Brazil. Our ambitions for this Conference must match the nature and the magnitude of the problems facing us. Scientific evidence shows how serious these problems are. We are overloading the planet's ability to absorb the effects of human activities in ways never before experienced in human history. While we still have time to make necessary changes, that time is fast running out.

For the Rio Conference to be truly successful, it is essential that governments become involved at the highest level in the preparations and that they not wait until the Conference itself.

The large number of non-governmental organizations and independent conferences now preparing their contributions to the Conference are presenting positive challenges to governments. Public forums are being held in all regions of the world. All these activities demonstrate that sustainable development is a participatory process on which we all should build.

Industrialized countries are still the biggest polluters. But we need a climate of cooperation between the North and the South if we are to conclude the international agreements that we need. And unless we are able to provide additional money and technological cooperation to developing countries in order to tackle their existing environmental and developmental problems, chances are less that they will see their best interests served by global agreements. Additionality, equity and efficiency are the only options that will work.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

Efficiency means that we must search for cost-effective solutions to environmental problems. If we fail to do so, then we risk stagnation of the whole process. Our goal must be to achieve maximum environmental benefit at the minimum cost. We will all benefit if we reduce emissions where reductions cost the least. This must be the primary objective of a new generation of environmental agreements.

In the ongoing negotiations on a climate convention, Norway has proposed a cost-effective way of achieving targets set to limit global emissions of greenhouse gases. Targets can be reached by States acting individually or in cooperation with other States. If they do, this would encourage investment in countries where reductions can be achieved more cheaply than the high-cost countries. This could tap new financial resources and encourage the private sector to take part.

Through a clearing-house we could make specific projects known, which could attract potential partners in the North and the South, projects which are economically profitable and which will lead to reduced total emissions by the countries involved. Then, I believe, we can truly pursue the common good by pursuing common interests.

The record of the United Nation as the universal protector and custodian of human rights is widely acclaimed. Still, it remains a paradox that human rights are systematically and persistently violated even today. We must oppose and obstruct such violations tirelessly and relentlessly. We must admit that we have been too selective in the past in pointing a finger at specific problems. We must defend human rights wherever and whenever they are violated. We must use the means of implementation and we must strengthen them when they are imperfect.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

In the light of the experience gained in connection with the Gulf crisis and the horrifying prospect of large-scale violence, social disruption and civil war in various regions of the world, we cannot simply put a lid on the new debate on the relationship between the concept of national sovereignty and the authority of the international community.

We have reached a stage in the ethical and political evolution of our civilization in which the compelling force of a broad public opinion will raise the issue of international enforcement in exceptional circumstances involving grave atrocities. Massive, deliberate violations of human rights will become known to the international community in an age of instant global television.

We should not pretend that there are easy solutions. But we must stress that governments are accountable for the way they treat their own populations. The United Nations must deal seriously with these dilemmas.

A tragic number of natural as well as man-made disasters have placed tremendous additional burdens on many developing countries. This year we have witnessed the tragedy of the Kurds, the new famine in Africa and another disastrous flood in Bangladesh.

The international community has all too often been slow to react to such disasters, as if they were completely unexpected. We have seen too many examples of international relief efforts that are slow in getting off the ground when crises occur.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

Too often, we see the lack of clear institutional responsibility and an ensuing lack of coordination. There is a need for a permanent machinery operating on red alert. There is a need for the United Nations to be given the resources to deal more quickly and more effectively with such crises. Responsibility should be vested in a person serving directly under the Secretary-General, who has sufficient authority to ensure effective action on behalf of the United Nations family.

In closing, I should like to express our respect and gratitude to our Secretary-General, who has guided our work for 10 years with such distinction and who has steered the Organization through some of the most difficult, but also the most promising years, of its history. His impeccable moral integrity, his sincerity and courage, and his outstanding political judgement, have enabled the United Nations more than once to rise to the occasion. The world is indebted to Javier Perez de Cuellar, a man of dedication and skill for having served us - the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. VELAYATI (Islamic Republic of Iran) (spoke in Persian; English text furnished by the delegation): At the outset, Sir, I should like to express my most sincere congratulations on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. It is indeed my earnest hope that under your leadership, this Assembly, which is meeting at such a crucial juncture of new international circumstances, will take

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constructive steps towards the enhancement of international peace, security and cooperation.

I also take this opportunity to offer my congratulations to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the People's Democratic Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea on their recent admission to the United Nations. Now that the two Koreas have joined the United Nations, I hope that the longstanding aspirations of the Korean people for unity will soon materialize.

In the course of the past few years, the world has undoubtedly undergone unprecedented developments, the most significant being, one might surmise, the crashing collapse of communism after 70 years of what was made to appear as unchallenged rule. I find this an opportune moment to congratulate the people and leadership of the Soviet Union on such an historic triumph, and to express my satisfaction at the realization of the aspirations of the people of the Soviet Union.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which shares extensive borders with a number of Soviet Republics, follows the developments in this country with great interest. Moreover, in the light of its friendly relations with the central Government and many commonalities with its Asian Republics, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to the promotion and expansion of bilateral cooperation with the Soviet Union and its Republics.

Today, the most important issues on the international agenda relate to the future structure of international relations and the concept of a new world order. The world after the cold war needs a new order; this is indisputable

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for the simple reason that the past order governing international relations has been unjust and inherently unstable. Therefore, now that the bipolar world that used to exist has all but crumbled - and gone with it, albeit, not fully, the past suspicions and rivalries which overshadowed the principles of the Charter - there seems to exist a golden opportunity for a new world order: a new order founded on the United Nations Charter and the principles of justice, peace, security, equality, mutual respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States, and for the cultural and moral values of all nations. Under the present circumstances, it is necessary that views be exchanged on the definition and formulation of the world order in such international forums as the United Nations General Assembly, which comprises almost all members of the international community.

Undoubtedly, the universality, acceptability and success of the new order can be guaranteed only through the active and serious participation of all members of the international community, particularly the third-world countries, which have thus far had little, if any, role in shaping the international order. Divine values should guide the process of the formulation and implementation of the future order; this imperative would ensure a healthy and sound order and preclude the recurrence of past aberrations and failures.

Based on the principles just mentioned, I should like to outline the elements that would constitute the future world order:

First, the United Nations should play a central role in guiding and coordinating the new world order. As such, it is incumbent on the Organization to rely on and operate in consonance with the views of its

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membership, and to distance itself from the traditional influence of the mighty - an unfortunate hallmark of the past unjust order. For the United Nations to play such a role, it needs to be strengthened in various fields. The issue of the revitalization of the United Nations, which is central to the Organization's relevance and its new role in the future order, needs to be addressed in earnest by all Members. Reappraisal of the structure, operating procedure and performance of the Security Council, the General Assembly, and the Secretariat, as the three main organs, figures prominently in this process. It should be borne in mind, however, that the issue of revitalization is of a functional nature, and, as such, should not lead to controversy involving national interests.

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Secondly, universal respect for human rights, as an important objective of mankind, is destined to occupy a place of distinction in the future world order. The exalted and sublime worth of the human person does not allow for monopoly by a particular system of thought or for manipulation for ulterior objectives. In order to ensure universal respect for human rights, mechanisms and arrangements are needed to widen and enrich the philosophical and conceptual foundations of human rights through an honest and vigorous consideration of the religions, traditions and cultures of various societies. This also entails a balanced emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights in parallel with civil and political rights. Furthermore, the well-placed emphasis on humanitarian aspects in the future order makes imperative, inter alia, the provision of practical measures to promote and expedite the efficacy of humanitarian assistance in emergency situations arising out of natural disasters and social and political crises. The inadequacy of international assistance to deal with the most basic needs created by the recent huge influx of Iraqi refugees into the Islamic Republic of Iran in the wake of the Persian Gulf crisis clearly underlined the debilitating lack of well-established mechanisms for a prompt and adequate international response.

Thirdly, if history is any indication, the stability and non-violent preservation of any system depend on economic justice. Hence, for the new world order to succeed it is imperative that it be constructed in such a way that it would, among other things, enable the developing countries - by providing the necessary structural mechanisms and guarantees and the conducive milieu - to devote their actual as well as their potential resources, both intellectual and material, to the evolution from the present unenviable state

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of desperate underdevelopment and stagnation into productive and creative societies consonant with and worthy of human dignity. The Secretary-General's treatment, in his report on the work of the Organization, of the world economic situation in general and, in particular, of the ever-deteriorating position of most of the developing countries amply illustrates the gloomy economic situation in the larger part of the world. Although the responsibility for solving economic problems at the national level rests first and foremost with the countries concerned, no national effort, however vigorous, can prove to be viably sustainable unless it is viewed within the context of a common responsibility of the world community and, more importantly, unless it is supported by appropriate arrangements, the conducive milieu, and effective international assistance.

Fourthly, preservation of the environment as the common heritage of mankind, and also as an asset for future generations, has fortunately received the ever-increasing attention of the world community. This positive trend deserves further accentuation in the new order. Since the negative consequences of the pollution of the environment cannot be contained within national boundaries, a proper approach calls for common responsibility, cooperation and coordinated action at the international level. Such a common responsibility requires that practical measures be devised to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technology, as well as the extension of technical assistance for combatting environmental pollution in developing countries.

Fifthly, in the wake of the collapse of the bipolar world, disarmament, and particularly the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, deserves to

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receive special priority. For even today, such concepts as nuclear deterrence, preemptive strike and offensive military doctrines are virtually fading, and so should the weapons that correspond to them.

The progress in the work of the Conference on Disarmament on the conclusion of the comprehensive convention on the prohibition of the production, development, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons is indeed commendable. It is our earnest hope that that convention will soon be concluded, thereby removing once and for all the danger of such weapons of mass destruction, which have taken a very heavy toll during the past decade. That, however, should not in any way entail discrimination against the third-world countries, particularly so far as development of their chemical industries for peaceful purposes is concerned. In the future world order, regional arms control can contribute to the enhancement of the process of general disarmament when placed in the context of a global arms control programme. Furthermore, the acceptability and success of any programme for regional arms control depend on ensuring the security of the countries of each region against threats emanating from within and outside their respective regions as well as on a non-discriminatory approach towards the weapons and the countries to which the programme will apply.

Sixthly, following the erosion of the climate of contention in the former bipolar world, propitious conditions have emerged for the resolution of regional disputes, which have emanated for the most part from super-Power rivalry. The settlement of a number of such crises over the past two years signals an encouraging trend, and in this connection the valuable efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations are indeed commendable. The

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United Nations, with its primary role in guiding the future world order, should endeavour to resolve the remaining regional crises through a new approach founded on promoting commonalities of values and interests among countries of each region, as well as on regional cooperation. Such an approach, which would foster the establishment of regional security and cooperation schemes in various regions, will also contribute to confidence-building, thus removing some of the causes of possible future regional conflagrations.

Within that context I should like briefly to examine three major regional crises that have attracted international attention in the course of the past several decades.

The Iraqi aggression against Kuwait and its consequences, which in the course of the past year have preoccupied the international community and particularly the United Nations, brought to the fore the necessity of dealing with the fundamental and long-term problems of the strategic Persian Gulf region. The bitter experience of the Persian Gulf war, which made clear the sources of stability and tension in our region, has demonstrated that security in the Persian Gulf region is attainable only through the expansion of relations and cooperation among the countries in the area. In our view, arrangements for security and cooperation in the Persian Gulf should be based on two fundamental principles.

First, the success of any arrangement for regional security and cooperation rests primarily on the common values and interests of the regional countries concerned. Deep-rooted bonds of religion, culture, history and commerce, as well as economic, political and international interests shared by

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the Persian Gulf countries, can naturally facilitate the achievement of this objective.

The second fundamental principle is that any security régime in the area has to be based on cooperation and confidence-building rather than on competition and a bloc formation, because in a competitive scenario inter-State relations tend to be based on mistrust, on an arms race and on tension, which, as recent history has shown, inherently fail to secure long-term stability for the region.

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Thus, cognizant of the fact that mutual confidence fosters cooperation and that the latter in turn augments confidence and indeed security, the following practical arrangements will contribute to devising a viable regional security and cooperation scheme in the Persian Gulf area. As a first and necessary step towards confidence-building, the Persian Gulf States participating in the arrangements will observe the following principles in their bilateral and regional relations: respect for one another's sovereignty and territorial integrity; inviolability of their international borders; non-resort to force in the settlement of their disputes; non-interference in one another's internal affairs; and dialogue and mutual understanding.

Secondly, the cooperation of the countries in the region in social, humanitarian and cultural, economic, industrial, scientific and technical, and political and international fields, as well as coordination in the preservation of the environment and in the energy sector, will undeniably be useful in fostering mutual confidence, which is essential for the success and longevity of any security regime.

Thirdly, any regional mechanism should be developed by the countries in the region without any foreign presence. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the southern littoral States of the Persian Gulf depend on the stability of this strategic waterway for their economic development. Furthermore, they consider the free flow of oil and the stability of world oil markets to be vital to their national interests. However, it should be borne in mind that stability, tranquility and an atmosphere of mutual confidence are only attainable in the

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area provided that it is free from the presence and involvement of outside forces. In this regard, we reiterate our objection to the presence of foreign forces in the region.

Serious endeavours towards the attainment of a regional security and cooperation scheme within the framework referred to have already been made, and the Islamic Republic of Iran has done its utmost to ensure the success of this process. With the help of our regional partners in the Persian Gulf, we have made substantial headway in achieving this common objective. We are confident that the countries in the region are fully capable of ensuring the security of this vital waterway through cooperation among themselves. The recent efforts of the Secretary-General for the implementation of paragraphs 6, 7 and 8 of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) is necessary constructive and commendable steps in the right direction, which will undoubtedly facilitate the establishment of a viable regional security and cooperation system.

Another crisis which, for the past 13 years, has been on the agenda of the international community is the question of Afghanistan, which directly affects the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, the two neighbouring countries that, in addition to bonds of religion, culture and history, have shouldered the heaviest burden by hosting more than five million Afghan refugees. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in pursuit of its principled policy on the Afghan question, has consistently lent its support to the establishment of an Islamic, independent, non-aligned government in Afghanistan, which maintains friendly relations with its neighbours. The achievement of such a government depends upon the unity of all walks of the Afghan Muslim people, and may be guaranteed only through free elections. The

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recent joint efforts made by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the Afghan mujahideen in the two countries with the objective of seeking a just solution to the Afghan problem, culminating in two joint meetings during the past two months in Islamabad and Tehran, is a major step in the right direction. The United Nations and, in particular, the Secretary-General, drawing upon recent similar experiences, can play a significant role in the formulation and implementation of a just and comprehensive solution in consonance with the wishes of the Afghan people, expressed through free elections. The Islamic Republic of Iran, having welcomed the Secretary-General's five-point statement of 21 May 1991 as a constructive step containing positive elements, is of the view that the statement should receive further elaboration and clarification.

The longest regional crisis in the history of the United Nations is also the closest and the most heart-rending to all Muslims. The Palestinian problem has persisted as a chronic malady, owing to the very nature of the international system. While there is increasing hope at the international level for the settlement of regional conflicts in line with the wishes and aspirations of peoples, regrettably, there is no hope in sight for the just and honourable settlement of the Palestinian problem and restoration of the rights of this uprooted people. What is nowadays called a peace plan for the Middle East, far from addressing a just solution to the problem, is geared to bolstering the Israeli position and creating havoc, discord and disarray in the ranks of the other side; what, in this circumstance, has no relevance are the Palestinian people, their immense suffering and their usurped rights. How could the international conference, even if held as proposed, restore the right to self-determination to the Palestinian people under circumstances in

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which Israel becomes more and more obdurate, the Palestinian populace in the occupied areas faces ever-increasing waves of repression and reprisal, Jewish emigration and the settlement policy in the occupied areas continue unabated and the Zionists continue their occupation of Islamic lands and commit further acts of aggression, particularly against Lebanon? Therefore, in the face of such harsh realities, the Palestinian people are justified in placing all their hopes in their glorious intifadah.

The approach of the present international system to the Palestinian question - wrought with double standards - as well as the persistence of Israel in continuing its policies of occupation and ruthless suppression of the Palestinians, leave no doubt that the just and honourable settlement of the Palestinian question can be accomplished in the future world order only through the deepening and strengthening of the ongoing heroic intifadah, a unified approach on the part of the world community to end the occupation of the Palestinian land and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the entire land of Palestine.

The current movement towards the establishment of a new order in international relations is taking place in the aftermath of the collapse of an unjust order whose major characteristic was the competition between the two super-Powers over domination of other countries. The utter failure of the experience based on rivalry and domination makes the necessity of precluding their entry in the future order all the more imperative. Should the necessity for a new order be manipulated so as to consolidate the position of a single Power as the dominant pole, it is a foregone conclusion that such an outcome would fail to usher in an atmosphere of confidence, let alone ensure effective international cooperation.

(Mr. Velayati, Islamic Republic of Iran)

We, as Members of the United Nations, once again find ourselves at a crossroads. Our choices today will be crucial in shaping the future world order. The question is, in order to face the many challenges of the new world, which course will we choose: the course of domination and discrimination whose doom is already foretold, or that of justice, peace and cooperation?

Mr. EVANS (Australia): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I am sure we will all benefit from your long experience here in the United Nations, and from your authority as President that derives from that experience. Australia enjoys strong bonds of friendship with Saudi Arabia and is honoured to serve with you as one of your Vice-Presidents for this session.

Australia warmly welcomes to membership of this body our Pacific island neighbours, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Equally, as a country of the Asia-Pacific region, we welcome the arrival at last of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. And Australia having been among the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, we are delighted now to welcome those countries too to United Nations membership.

Mr. President, you are presiding over the General Assembly at a time when the United Nations is at last attaining the coherence and momentum necessary to meet the goals of its founders. The United Nations has sometimes been perceived as an automonous entity - good or bad, progressive or retrograde, vibrant or moribund, according to the eye of the beholder. In fact, it can do no more than reflect the wishes of its Members and the relationships between them. Its success depends on the membership's capacity for compromise rather than confrontation, for generosity rather than greed, for humanitarianism rather than hostility - and for a measure of idealism.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

Throughout the United Nations system a quite dramatic change of atmosphere has been evident since 1989, most markedly, though not exclusively, in security matters following the collapse of the cold war. Both the forty-fourth and the forty-fifth sessions of the General Assembly have been widely remarked as having been among the most harmonious and cooperative on record, with major progress on issues such as the environment, human rights and even the reform and rationalization of the United Nations administrative system itself. The old and all-too-familiar voting blocs acted less cohesively, and with more regard to consensus.

These atmospheric developments are partly attributable, of course, to flow-on effects from the end of the cold war, but they appear to owe rather more to an emerging world-wide recognition that a great many problems can really only be dealt with effectively by cooperation on a multilateral, and in some cases global, scale. To the familiar and established topics in this category, such as refugees, famine, debt and the control of nuclear weapons, have now been added issues such as major environmental problems, AIDS and narcotics. In an increasingly complex world the United Nations is itself becoming an increasingly complex place.

Those are all issues which this session, under your guidance, Mr. President, will need to address. They are also issues which will confront the new Secretary-General, whose appointment will be perhaps the most important decision to be taken at this session. This is not to suggest that the Secretary-General is more important than the Organization, but it is a recognition of the vital task the new Secretary-General will fulfil as the United Nations approaches its fiftieth anniversary.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

Much has already been said about the qualities which the new Secretary-General will need to take up the tasks that the United Nations is now able to, and must, address. Foremost amongst them must be integrity, an independence of mind and a willingness and desire to serve the United Nations in the interest of the Organization as a whole. The Secretary-General must be a skilled and patient negotiator, with an intuition for the right moment to intervene and with the patience and stamina to bring negotiations to a successful conclusion. He or she must provide intellectual leadership in the crafting of imaginative approaches to the multiplicity of problems, old and new, requiring resolution through the United Nations.

Of course, the Secretary-General cannot develop these ideas working alone; in this, as well as in other responsibilities, he or she must have the managerial capacity to harness fully all the resources and talents of those working in the Secretariat. Finally, in an age of mass communications, and with the spread of democracy, he or she must be able effectively to transmit the principles and purposes of the Organisation to a wider public which will provide it with its necessary base of support.

The agenda the Secretary-General faces can be summarized under four broad headings: political and security issues; development issues; humanitarian issues; and United Nations reform. That is a daunting collection on which I will offer some thoughts, though certainly not prescriptions. But before so doing I should place on record Australia's admiration for the determination and wisdom demonstrated by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar over the past decade. He has served the world well through his personal involvement in a number of international issues, including Cyprus, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Iraq-Iran, and through his overall management of the United Nations

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

in times of crisis such as during the recent Gulf war. He has shepherded the United Nations from confrontation to great-Power cooperation. Moreover in the past decade the financial situation of the United Nations has improved and there has been an increased preparedness to look to the need for administrative reform. He can look forward to the completion of his two terms with a sense of very considerable achievement.

When the history of the first 50 years of the United Nations is written I am certain that particular prominence will be given to Mr. Perez de Cuellar's outstanding contribution to the resolution of regional conflicts. Those in Cambodia and Namibia are but two examples, where my country has had a particular role and interest. The new Secretary-General will need to maintain this momentum and build on the pattern of cooperation which has been achieved between the major Powers.

United Nations representatives have played an outstanding role on Cambodia, and Australia regards with particular satisfaction the results of the meetings of the Cambodian Supreme National Council and the five Permanent members of the Security Council in Thailand in August and here in New York in the past few days. The Permanent Five, regional countries including the co-Chairman of the Paris Conference, Indonesia, under the very able guidance of its Foreign Minister Mr. Ali Alatas, and Australia, and the Cambodian parties themselves have all striven long and hard to achieve a peaceful settlement to the Cambodian dispute. All the signs are now that no obstacles remain to signature of a comprehensive settlement in Paris next month. But clearly, once a settlement is thus achieved, the peace will have to be consolidated, and that will be no easy task.

(Mr. Evans, Australia)

The United Nations will have before it one of its most complex and costly decisions when the Security Council and then the General Assembly debate plans for the United Nations transitional authority in Cambodia. The authority's assignment will be daunting, but it is a mark of the very great distance we, as United Nations Members, have travelled in the last two years that such an undertaking will soon be a reality. I reaffirm here Australia's willingness to make a substantial contribution to the authority and to continue to play our role as a facilitator of a lasting peace in Cambodia.

In the Middle East, there is now a better prospect than in recent years for significant progress on Arab-Israeli issues as the international conference proposed for October approaches. What part the United Nations will play in the continued search for a resolution of the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli dispute will be, of course, a matter for the parties themselves to decide. It is clear though that the United Nations, and the new Secretary-General in particular, has the potential to play a constructive and valuable role.

We are also hopeful that the Secretary-General's continued efforts to achieve a settlement of the Cyprus question will bear fruit, the more so because of the personal effort the Secretary-General has invested in this task, and we would urge the parties to proceed with the proposed conference.

But just as we witness progress in these areas of tension on issues which have been on the United Nations agenda for some time, so new issues confront the international community. The violence now erupting in Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia is a stark reminder of the enormous difficulties which can result from social and ethnic tensions. We are all acutely conscious of how newly

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emergent nationalism within the borders of many existing countries around the world is creating a new set of strains and dilemmas in the conduct of international relations.

The most immediate area of concern for the international community is the situation in Yugoslavia. Australia, not least because more than 250,000 of our people have strong links of family and culture with Yugoslavia, has voiced its grave concern at the breakdown of constitutional order, the tragic loss of life and the impending threat of all-out war in that country.

The conflict in Yugoslavia has certainly reached the point where the international community needs to reinforce the efforts of the European Community to resolve the crisis. Australia has accordingly asked the Security Council to take up the issue and use its influence to help bring about an end of the fighting. There are important issues to be resolved about the future shape of Yugoslavia's republics, and in particular about the position of minorities within those republics. These are issues that must be seriously addressed and resolved by negotiation once the fighting has stopped, but there can be no justification for resorting to force to settle them. Unfortunately there can be no doubt that the conflict within Yugoslavia has now created a situation which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security in the region, and one which demands the attention of the United Nations.

With the new and constructive role of the United Nations come certain responsibilities and the need to recognize that changes in the international environment demand changes in this Assembly's approach to regional developments. For too long, debate and resolutions on a number of regional

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issues have been characterized here by outdated rhetoric. Let me make a plea to the Assembly that we might be able to consider changes to language which no longer reflects the new realities of the 1990s.

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For example, Australia hopes that debate on such traditional items as the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, decolonization and South Africa will be conducted in a fashion that acknowledges the opportunities for progress and, at least in South Africa's case, the progress already achieved. Similarly, Australia hopes that it may be possible to rescind resolution 3379 (XXX) of 1975 equating Zionism with racism.

No one can be complacent over the difficulties still ahead in the resolution of regional conflict. We do, however, share a genuine global sense of optimism about the future role of the United Nations in peace and security matters. There are four distinct areas of United Nations activity in this regard: peace enforcement; peace-keeping; peacemaking or preventive diplomacy; and arms control and disarmament.

The Gulf war was a classic case of peace enforcement by collective security measures. The founders of the United Nations recognized that it would have to have available to it as a final resort the use of force to resist aggression. But willingness to undertake enforcement action, by itself, does not constitute a system of collective security. Its actual use on this occasion will have a deterrent effect for the future, but the establishment of a true system of collective security also demands progress on multilateral disarmament, the development of confidence-building measures in various regions of the world and commitment to the removal, on a consistent and even-handed basis, of the root causes of conflict.

In fact, situations like Namibia and Cambodia involving peace-keeping forces are more likely than the Gulf situation to set the pattern of future United Nations action, that is, a form of peace-making activity which falls somewhere between good offices at one end of the spectrum and enforcement action on the other. The final settlement of a dispute will be through

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negotiation, but often with a peace-keeping component. Although peace-keeping operations were not originally envisaged in the Charter, they fit precisely the sort of circumstances which are likely to occur more often in the post-cold-war era.

The Secretariat has done an outstanding job in this area over a number of years and I must pay tribute to the individuals involved. There are now over 11,000 military and 3,000 civilian personnel from 54 countries serving in nine United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Middle East, the sub-continent, Cyprus, Angola and Central America. A further 2,700 personnel are on standby, ready to be sent to the Western Sahara. Five new peace-keeping or related operations have been approved in the first nine months of 1991 with UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) yet to come, placing an enormous strain on those parts of the Secretariat responsible for their creation and administration. Clearly, resources must be increased and upgraded and we welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of the team of consultants to report on how the organization of peace-keeping activities might be improved in the light of these expanded responsiblities.

In a new climate of international cooperation it would be logical to anticipate an expanded role for the United Nations in peace-making or preventive diplomacy. The new international circumstances underline both the need and the opportunity for the United Nations to expand its hitherto successful but limited activity in this area. More often now than previously, the United Nations must be able to identify potential conflicts, analyse their causes and bring the parties to see the possibilities for resolution of their differences while conflicts are still only at the dispute stage. This will require both new approaches to and additional resources in the Secretariat for

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information gathering and conflict resolution. What is needed chiefly is a body of skilled and experienced staff who can not only analyse information, but develop options for action which can be presented to the Secretary-General or the Security Council.

In order to establish the conditions for a global peace, the United Nations must also intensify its work on disarmament and arms control. The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency are cornerstones of arms control. Revelations about Iraq's extensive clandestine nuclear programme in violation of its NPT and safeguards obligations, the first and only such case in the history of the Treaty, have highlighted the need for an even more effective and an even more intrusive safeguards regime that can meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond. We have warmly welcomed the recent decisions of China, France, South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania to become parties to the NPT and hope that these decisions will help influence those few countries remaining outside the Treaty to re-evaluate the benefits of membership.*

We also welcome the stated intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to sign a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, in accordance with the obligations it accepted on acceding to the NPT Treaty. We look forward to the full, prompt and unconditional implementation of that agreement, because we remain concerned at the continued operation by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of an unsafeguarded nuclear facility and at reports that it has been building other nuclear facilities, leaving open the question of whether it is pursuing a nuclear-weapons capability.

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* Mr. Rogers (Belize), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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This course of action by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is destabilizing to the Korean peninsula and to the north Asian region generally.

A universal and non-discriminatory register of conventional arms transfers under the auspices of the United Nations should also be established as soon as possible as an important international confidence-building measure. Australia participated in the United Nations expert group on conventional arms transfers. With the finalization of that group's recommendations and the support by the G-7 and the P-5 for the establishment of an arms transfer register, there is now an expectation of action by the international community.

The Gulf war underlined the crucial importance of a successful result to the negotiations on a chemical weapons convention. They have now entered a critical final stage. It is clear, however, that a further intensification of effort is required. The deadline of 1992 set by the Conference on Disarmament for completing the treaty must be observed. As I have proposed to my colleagues on the Conference on Disarmament, a meeting before too long of that Conference at the ministerial level will, in my view, be necessary to provide sufficient impetus for the negotiations and a political framework for resolving outstanding issues.

The Third Review Conference of the biological weapons Convention, held in Geneva last month, showed that there is a need for more to be done to further strengthen that important regime and, above all, to ensure that that Convention becomes universal.

In the new international environment, issues of international economic growth and development must take an even more prominent place on the agenda of

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the new Secretary-General. Substantial economic progress has been made in some regions, as for example, in parts of Asia and Latin America, but great human needs exist unaddressed, particularly in parts of Africa where, unfortunately, economic and social conditions have continued to deteriorate.

In the economic forums of the United Nations system, there is increasing recognition that each nation must be responsible for promoting policies that will encourage the participation of all sections of their populations in the economic and social development processes. Furthermore, a relationship is increasingly being noticed between human freedoms and sustained economic development. For the benefits of rational domestic policies to be fully realized, however, the major industrialized countries must play their part. They must maintain their efforts to foster greater stability in the international economic environment and take action to remove the international barriers to economic development.

The diminution in the security threat has enabled more resources to be available for development, both in the developing world and in central and eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. But it will be important to ensure that assistance provided in eastern Europe be additional to levels of assistance to developing countries and not represent a diversion of resource flows away from them. The alleviation of poverty in the developing world remains the central humanitarian challenge.

Perhaps most crucial, however, to the economic future of developed and developing countries is the need to strengthen and liberalize the multilateral trading system, both in the achievement of a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round and in its aftermath. The importance of such liberalization was recognized in the United Nations international development strategy for the

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1990s. Further liberalization of trade would not only boost world economic growth, but engender the stability and confidence needed by the emerging market economies of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as well as providing an important stimulus to development efforts in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

The issues of peace and security and of development have of course been central to the deliberations and activities of the United Nations for many years. They are issues that have demonstrated the role and functions of previous Secretaries-General and are issues that I am sure that the new Secretary-General will know well. What is new for all of us is the emergence over just the last few years of a whole group of previously neglected issues for which international solutions are now actively being actively sought - issues, moreover, which for the most part generate quite strong feelings, are not readily susceptible to straightforward technical negotiation and settlement, and so require great skill in handling.

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Undoubtedly the most prominent recent addition to the new agenda has been the environment. While from the 1970s environmental protection became an important part of the domestic political programmes of many nations, it was not perceived then by most governments as having an urgent international dimension. The 1980s saw a significant shift in both perceptions and reality and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in Brazil next year, will cast in relief the major new issues involved in the protection of the global environment in the face of the impact of climate change and increased threats to the biosphere. Every effort must be made to achieve ecologically sustainable development. As part of this process, due attention needs to be paid to the imperatives of economic growth and for appropriate mechanisms to be established for the transfer of technology to enable developing countries to meet the challenges involved in the protection of the environment. The interrelationship between protecting the global environment and ensuring global economic development will prove to be the critical issue as the end of the century approaches.

Human rights is not, of course, a new issue. The element of innovation lies in the way in which much past rhetoric of concern is now being translated into action, not only within the United Nations but in bodies such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The dramatic changes which have taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe over the last few years have been matched by a significant diminution in the abuse of human rights. Equally there have been changes for the better in many parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America. None the less, serious abuses continue, including in our own region - not least in Burma. We believe that further progress can be assisted through constructive dialogue of the kind that Australia actively pursues bilaterally and multilaterally. We believe it crucial that United

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Nations human rights mechanisms be strengthened, and would encourage appropriate funding being provided within the United Nations system to accord resources for all human rights activities, including the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights.

The global refugee problem remains as large as ever. The challenge for Governments - and the international system - is to preserve the essential protections that must be extended to refugees while, at the same time, providing other appropriate responses and humanitarian assistance for persons displaced by other causes.

The United Nations will, regrettably, need to continue to respond to natural disasters and other large-scale humanitarian emergencies which occur around the world. Like other countries, Australia has been concerned for some time that coordination among the various organizations involved in United Nations humanitarian emergency relief is sometimes inadequate to the need. We wish to see improved coordination of such responses. What we need to devise in any General Assembly resolution is not some facile cosmetic response, but a carefully considered mechanism which actually works in practice.

In the aftermath of the Gulf war we have seen the United Nations revisit the key question of intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. The Charter notes explicitly that the United Nations is not authorized "to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State". Yet there are also basic goals in the United Nations Charter, in particular in the social and humanitarian area, which have always qualified the principle of non-intervention. The monitoring machinery successfully

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being developed by the Commission on Human Rights is but one example of how the balance struck between considerations of sovereignty and humanitarian imperatives has evolved.

Today we can readily endorse the Secretary-General's view in this year's annual report

> "that the principle of non-interference with the essential domestic jurisdiction of States cannot be regarded as a protective barrier behind which human rights could be massively or systematically violated with impunity." (A/46/1, p. 10)

The United Nations role in Iraq following the war, while governed by the enforcement provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter, underlined, nevertheless, that sometimes such United Nations action is needed in the face of great humanitarian emergencies which threaten international peace and security even though there may be no agreement from the Member State most directly concerned. We are not yet at the stage where we can prescribe new activity or, indeed, Charter amendment for the United Nations to enable it greater flexibility to cope with such situations. But we have to recognize that there may be cases where a more flexible approach is in fact needed if the United Nations is to meet its global objectives successfully.

There is thus a widespread consensus that the present unwieldy Secretariat structure - the product of the conflict and compromises of the cold war and the uncoordinated responses to specific problems of the past - is not well suited to the range of tasks which Member States now expect of the United Nations and which, in the new international climate, it should be capable of performing. It is unreasonable to impose on the incoming

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Secretary-General a structure which he or she will find so much difficulty in managing, which reflects past problems, not present realities, and which the new Secretary-General, as chief administrative officer, has had no input in shaping.

Australia would thus support a resolution in the General Assembly which would sweep away these constraints on the Secretary-General and which would, on the basis of consultation with the incoming Secretary-General, establish procedures to ensure the recruitment from all regions of the most outstanding men and women to work in the Secretariat, and set out a new basic structure for the Secretariat which would permit it to fulfil its roles in the development of policy options to assist the deliberative organs and in the implementation of their decisions. The detailed elaboration of the basic structure should be the responsibility of the Secretary-General as the United Nation's chief administrative officer.

Ultimately, it will be for Member States and for the new Secretary-General to acknowledge that if the United Nations is, indeed, to become the sort of organization which its founders foresaw, now is the time. Never since the end of the Second World War has there been so much hope. That hope has to be translated into political will: to achieve and maintain peace, to better the economic lot of mankind, and to permit the individual to live decently and free from fear. In fulfilling this role the United Nations must be purposeful, energetic and adaptable. Its ultimate success will depend on the capacity of Member States to work together in the common interest. The achievement of which the United Nations is capable is worth the effort of all of us to bring about.

Mr. SOLANA MORALES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset I should like to congratulate Ambassador Samir Shihabi on his election to preside over the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are convinced that under his leadership we shall address the items on our agenda successfully.

I should also like to express the gratitude of the Government of Mexico to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar for the way in which he has conducted the affairs of our Organization since he took office. Over the past 10 years, the international community has undergone a radical transformation. From a situation of bipolar tension we have entered a period of dialogue and cooperation. Under his leadership, the Secretary-General has contributed significantly to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in this new stage.

We welcome the seven new Member States. The entry of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitutes an important step towards the full attainment of the universality of the United Nations. We congratulate the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, whose membership constitutes a renewed expression of the right of self-determination of peoples. We also welcome the admission of the States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands.

The current session is being held under the sign of change. Transformations within States are having repercussions on the nature of world relations and on the very structure of the international system. The United Nations today reflects the new political map, and this is a factor which contributes to its dynamic change.

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In a rapidly changing world, past political and ideological frames of reference are no longer valid. However, the principles of objectivity of the United Nations do retain their full validity: today, we have an opportunity to achieve the objectives promulgated in San Francisco almost half a century ago. However, we cannot ignore the fact that there are serious dangers of instability looming on the horizon: we are witnessing the breakdown of the political and military order in eastern and central European countries. Added to popular demands for new democratic institutions and practices, we see nationalistic aspirations that are reviving conflicts long thought to have been overcome.

The arms race and the irrational use of scarce resources that should be channelled to the task of development still persist. Although regional conflicts have been freed from the bipolar struggle, their solution demands that options be put forward which are based on local realities. These are challenges that the United Nations must face at this time.

Change in the economic sphere has also been intense. We have moved forward towards trade integration, expanded markets and enhanced productivity; nevertheless, there is still a real danger that the new trade groups will be closed to the outside and will revive protectionist tendencies, hindering real expansion in international trade. Those of us who are participating in arrangements of this nature, in common or free markets, must shoulder the commitment to remain open to trade with other regions. This is Mexico's firm position.

Disparities between North and South are becoming increasingly evident. Faced with the risk that the gap between development and poverty may widen even further, it is indispensable for the trend towards the concentration of

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growth and technical development in just one small group of countries to be reversed. If the deepening economic assymetry between nations is not corrected, its effect will be to create greater instability for all countries.

For Mexico today, the exercise of sovereignty demands a greater participation in an increasingly interdependent world. Only in this way will we be able to bolster the course we project for our nation and accomplish the objectives of development and prosperity we have set for ourselves. Mexico is determined to contribute, decisively, to determining the shape of the changes that are transforming the globe. For this reason, we are open to all facets of diverse and complex international life. For this reason, Mexico is promoting new forms of political understanding, economic cooperation and multilateral collaboration. For this reason, it favours concerted action and negotiated solutions to conflicts. Mexico's support for multilateral organizations is part and parcel of its active and diversified foreign policy: it is active because it espouses all initiatives that foster understanding between nations; it is diversified because its efforts are focused on more than one geographical area or organization.

On the basis of its foreign policy principles and of precise objectives attuned to the times, Mexico has forged political and economic links with all regions of the world. It has thus expanded its commercial ties with a variety of countries in the Americas, Asia and Europe while at the same time participating in regional and subregional concerted action. In Latin America, Mexico has promoted significant efforts to define common positions on issues of major interest for the region; initiatives such as the Group of Three, in which we participate along with Colombia and Venezuela, and the Rio Group have enabled us to establish cooperation programmes with neighbouring countries and

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have promoted understanding between us and similar bodies in other regions of the world.

Within this context, special reference should be made to the first Ibero-American summit last July, which was attended by the Heads of State and of Government of the 21 Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries in Latin America and Europe; in Guadalajara, they adopted a resolution to establish an Ibero-American conference to promote cooperation and exchange views on the major challenges of our times. Ibero-America is thus affirming its identity and renewing its will to contribute to shaping a more participatory, more equitable and, in short, a less exclusive global structure.

Maintaining international peace and security continues to be a fundamental priority of the United Nations. In view of the rapid transformations taking place in the world and the renewed possibilities for negotiation, Mexico reiterates its view that all conflicts can be settled peacefully. In this context, the role of the United Nations in achieving settlements of regional conflicts leading to definitive accords, as in the case of Cyprus, Cambodia and Western Sahara, takes on special importance.

Nearer to Mexico, in Central America, Mexico has taken part in developing negotiation processes aimed at achieving stable and lasting peace. We give our decisive support to the steps taken by the Secretary-General in the peace-making process in El Salvador; we offer him our gratitude for his efforts towards solving these conflicts.

Recent events in Central America are contributing to a new climate of trust and cooperation. Mexico attaches special importance to the recently-established diplomatic relations between the two sister countries of Belize and Guatemala.

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We harbour the hope that the initiatives under way in the Middle East will result in a peaceful settlement based on respect for the legitimate rights and interests of the parties involved and on observance of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

The negotiation processes under way provide a model for peace-keeping in the years to come. They are laying the groundwork for a view of international security based on the commitment to avoid military confrontation and its enormous social cost.

The new conditions in international politics must be reflected in the disarmament field. The grounds formerly used to justify an unbridled arms race and to foster the indiscriminate proliferation of all types of weapons no longer exist. At the dawning of the twenty-first century, the world community should have a universal system of non-proliferation and reduction of weapons of mass destruction, of the ballistic missiles each side has, and of conventional arsenals. Priority should be given in the United Nations to examining recent initiatives aimed at achieving these objectives.

Mexico reiterates its call for an end to nuclear testing and for control of the transfers of conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction. In so doing, it emphasizes its commitment to all measures that encourage progress towards general and complete disarmament.

As the East-West confrontation fades away and progress is made towards settling regional conflicts that for so many years were high on our agenda, matters of global importance, surpassing any one State's ability to deal with, are becoming especially relevant. The polarization of wealth and extreme poverty, the promotion of human rights, the protection of the environment,

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cooperation for development, the eradication of the drugs traffic and the impact of population movements are on all our minds. Some of these issues will be themes of international conferences held under the auspices of the United Nations during this decade. In dealing with them, the principle of shared responsibility and the strengthening of cooperation based on a comprehensive outlook, with full respect for the sovereignty of States and for non-intervention, should prevail.

International cooperation in the most disparate areas is based on commitments which are freely entered into, and mutually agreed upon, by the Members of the United Nations. This involves legal instruments which are compatible with the basic norms of international law

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We cannot agree with the argument that in today's interdependent world it is anachronistic to refer to the legal equality of States or to respect for their sovereign rights. The Government of Mexico is concerned about a dangerous tendency in international forums to promote, on the basis of what are claimed to be universal values, initiatives that undermine principles as fundamental as the self-determination of peoples and non-intervention.

International events following the tragic aftermath of the armed conflict in the Persian Gulf have led to the raising of a central issue going beyond that tendency. There is a danger that, in contradiction to the United Nations Charter, international organizations will, in advancing arguments of humanitarian need, weaken the sovereignty of States. That would set precedents that we could not accept. We urgently need to strike a balance between international cooperation, the responsibility of States and respect for their internal jurisdiction.

It is worth noting, in regard to human rights, that problems such as extreme poverty, suffered by at least half the inhabitants of the planet, are overlooked, while new emphasis is being placed on mechanisms to monitor internal political processes, which it is claimed in some quarters should be handled by the United Nations. Mexico strongly reiterates its position that this area is the exclusive jurisdiction of States. Any multilateral assistance in political matters is admissible only at the express request of the Governments concerned. Abandoning this basic precept would be a serious backward step when possibilities are being opened up for a new harmony in international relations, to which Mexico is committed.

(Mr. Solana Morales, Mexico)

In parallel with the intense processes of change that have occurred in recent months, a general conviction has emerged that the United Nations needs to be strengthened and revitalized.

Mexico is willing to participate in a process of reform that contributes to improving the efficiency of our Organization and enabling it to measure up to the new international situation. It will not be an easy task. The opportunity that we have today to strengthen the United Nations could be wasted if we are not clear about the objectives to be pursued and about the most suitable ways of dealing with the priority items on the multilateral agenda.

A great deal of thought must be given to the areas opening up for the United Nations. Its organs - and particularly the Security Council - have great potential for action. This has made it possible for negotiated solutions to be found for some regional conflicts. However, there is a grave risk that such concerted action will in time conceal unilateral initiatives.

One of the objectives of reform of the United Nations should be to preserve the balance between its various organs. The Security Council, the General Assembly, the International Court of Justice, the Secretariat and the Economic and Social Council should give each other mutual support in advancing towards the common objectives: the preservation of international peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development.

The United Nations has become more relevant as the central element in ordering and guiding international relations. It faces the challenge of creating just and equitable ties between nations, through the democratic participation of its Members.

(Mr. Solana Morales, Mexico)

Intimately related to what I have just said is our concern that a reform process could promote some topics to the detriment of others. It would be a mistake to suppose that the Organization should concentrate on the so-called new issues or emergency problems and neglect issues that have been on the agenda for a number of years and that are also fundamental. The development and codification of international law have been, and should continue to be, a priority of the United Nations.

We recognize that encouraging steps have been taken towards global peace. However, world stability will not be guaranteed while the contrast persists between well-being and abject poverty, both within nations and between them. We should devise realistic and pragmatic ways to put the topics of economic development and international cooperation at the top of the multilateral agenda. Democracy and development are intimately linked. We must work on both for the economic and social development of our peoples.

Mexico has demonstrated its loyalty to the cause of the United Nations during the Organization's 46-year history. We reiterate our commitment to its principles and purposes. There is talk of a new world order. But little has been done to give serious collective thought to the matter, thought from which could emerge the shape of such an order, which can be stable only to the extent that it reconciles the ideas and interests of the whole international community.

That is why the current session of the General Assembly is important. It is perhaps the first to give us an opportunity to bring together the many different visions of the future and arrive at proposals outlining the profile of the United Nations of tomorrow. Let us not miss the opportunity we have at this exceptional juncture to carry out our responsibilities.

Mr. KALPAGE (Sri Lanka): I have the honour to convey to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Assembly, the greetings and good wishes of Sri Lanka's President, Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa. My President expresses the hope that the deliberations and decisions of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session will prove beneficial for the welfare of the peoples of the world.

On behalf of the delegation of Sri Lanka, let me congratulate Ambassador Samir Shihabi on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

We are meeting at a historic period in world affairs. Dramatic changes are occurring in many parts of the world. One year ago it would have been impossible to foresee, still less to forecast, what has taken place in the past several weeks. Relationships between nations are changing with breathtaking rapidity; old relationships are fading away, new relationships are emerging. Our President's friendly disposition, his diplomatic skills, his vast experience in the work of the United Nations are widely recognized. These qualities will no doubt stand us in good stead in our deliberations at this particularly important session.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

To your predecessor, the Foreign Minister of Malta, Professor Guido de Marco, we express our appreciation for the manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the Assembly's forty-fifth session. We are aware of his determined efforts towards the rationalization and revitalization of the work of the General Assembly. We convey to him our best wishes for the years ahead.

Seven new Member States, four from Asia and the Pacific region, have been admitted to the United Nations this year. We welcome accession of both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to full membership in the Organization. May their membership in the United Nations result in the fulfilment of the aspirations of their peoples.

We are glad that two island States of the Pacific - the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia - have been admitted as Member States. We congratulate them and wish them well.

We are happy to welcome back to the community of nations the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania.

This world Organization, founded in the aftermath of a world war, has more than trebled its membership since its inception. In 1945 its membership stood at 51. Today, 46 years later, it has risen to 166. In the intervening period, another world war has been averted. This is due, in no small measure, to the existence and the efforts of the United Nations and to the unremitting toil of all those who have laboured unceasingly to promote international peace and fellowship.

The United Nations is fortunate to have been served by a succession of distinguished Secretaries-General. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, during his 10 years in office, has shown courage and fortitude and a deep sense of commitment to the cause of peace and international understanding.

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His patient and quiet diplomacy has earned for him gratitude and appreciation worldwide. If the United Nations is now ready to move into a new era, much of the credit for sustaining it in the past decade would surely go to Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

The need for recourse to the United Nations on a number of occasions to seek solutions to problems of concern to the world community has resulted in renewed interest among Member States in the structures and procedures of the Organization. There has been wide-ranging discussion on how the United Nations could be restructured and revitalized so as to make it more efficient in its functioning and more effective in the implementation of measures to secure peace and promote development.

The security and the development of a small country like Sri Lanka depends largely on the United Nations. Adherence by all Member States to the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, mutual respect and equality, peaceful settlement of disputes and peaceful coexistence is fundamental. For a small country like Sri Lanka, what refuge is there other than the Charter of the United Nations?

Sri Lanka, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations, is determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. Despite a hostile external economic environment and a terrorist problem, we continue to maintain a relatively high index of development. Our economy is growing at over 6 per cent, inflation is being reduced, prices are stabilizing, investments are increasing and so is production. We recognize the importance to development of the private sector. In the spheres of health care and education, we continue to provide services which have resulted in a

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reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates, an increased life expectancy and a further improvement in literacy.

For some years now Sri Lanka has suffered the trauma of civil strife. The Government of Sri Lanka has repeatedly affirmed its readiness for negotiations to resolve any grievances. Some of these grievances have already been solved. Others can, and must, be settled through negotiation. Whatever differences may exist among Sri Lankans, these differences can only be resolved by and among Sri Lankans through consultation, compromise and consensus.

Sri Lanka has a terrorist problem. The problem of terrorism is by no means peculiar to Sri Lanka. Attention has been focused by some on the human rights situation in our country. We make no attempt to conceal our problems; nor do we condone any violation of human rights. Sri Lanka is firmly committed to the observance of the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We are a party to human rights Conventions. Sri Lanka reports to the United Nations bodies on human rights. Sri Lanka fulfils its obligations.

As to the process of development, the alleviation of poverty is a high priority on the agenda of development of the Government of Sri Lanka. It is pertinent to bear in mind that development cannot ignore cultural legacies rooted in history and firm traditional backgrounds. The harmonization of these cultural differences in welding together a national identity is important. We are striving for self-sustaining development aimed at improving living conditions while preserving cultural values derived from the religions and philosophies long cherished by our people.

In harmony with this concept of development, we have in Sri Lanka, under the leadership of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, a unique poverty alleviation

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

programme, known locally as "Janasaviya" - which means "the people's strength". "Janasaviya" is a development process based on human values. The family and the home are at the core of the efforts to implement this anti-poverty programme. As my President himself stated on the occasion of his inauguration on 2 January 1989:

"If we cannot help those who are deprived, we certainly cannot protect those who are privileged."

Sri Lanka's urban and rural housing programmes have been hailed internationally. It was on a proposal by President Premadasa that the United Nations observed the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987. Housing for all by the year 2000 is a goal that Sri Lanka is determined to achieve.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

The ongoing international debate on environmental concerns and sustainable development has once again brought to the fore the imperative of multilateralism and interdependence. In this context, the central role of the United Nations in the Conference on Environment and Development is necessary and appropriate. I do believe therefore that it is important that the General Assembly convey its views, clearly defined, to the relevant preparatory bodies so that viable and realistic proposals may be submitted to Rio de Janeiro.

Global poverty, which is a common threat to the stability of national and international structures, is one of the major sources of environmental degradation. The persistence of appalling economic disparities between nations and within nations has no place in a new vision of the future world. Our one world cannot long endure part privileged, part deprived.

For over 40 years the world has been haunted by the spectre of a global nuclear war. However, the recent dramatic improvement in East-West relations is a markedly encouraging development in the quest for general and complete disarmament. We welcome the achievements of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter Range Missiles (INF Treaty) and the START Treaty and we look forward to further progress in the reduction and eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons.

Sri Lanka hopes that, with the acceptance of an intensified work programme in the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, new substantive proposals which might form the basis of a consensus will be forthcoming to enable the adoption of the convention on chemical weapons by 1992. It is essential that the convention should retain its multilateral character in its implementation, and that it be non-discriminatory and supportive of international cooperation in economic and technological development for purposes not prohibited by the

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

convention. In this light, Sri Lanka is actively considering becoming an original signatory to such a convention.

Sri Lanka welcomes in principle the initiative for the establishment of a register of international conventional arms transfers under the auspices of the United Nations. We are of the view that the recent conclusions reached and recommendations formulated by the United Nations group of experts on arms transfers would serve as a basis for further action in this field. The illicit trade in conventional arms is a cause for much concern. Such trade has provided arms to terrorists, drug traffickers, and other anti-social groups resulting in instability, suffering and destruction at the national, regional and international levels.

It was more than two decades ago, on the initiative of the 1970 non-aligned summit Conference in Lusaka, that Sri Lanka and Tanzania jointly presented a resolution to the United Nations on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. A Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly in 1971. An Ad Hoc Committee to implement this Declaration was appointed by the General Assembly in 1973. In 1979 the Conference of Littoral and Hinterland States, held in New York, adopted seven principles of agreement for the implementation of the Declaration. In 1980 the General Assembly requested the Ad Hoc Committee to engage in preparatory work for a conference on the Indian Ocean to be held in 1981. For a number of reasons the preparatory work of the Ad Hoc Committee could not be completed and the holding of the conference was delayed.

Acting on the renewed mandate of the General Assembly in resolution 45/77 of 12 December 1990, the Ad Hoc Committee held two sessions in April and July of this year. The Committee has completed the preparatory work to enable the convening of a Conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo in 1992 in consultation with the host country, Sri Lanka.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

We would welcome the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in the proposed conference. Their cooperation would result in useful discussions to achieve the objectives of the Declaration.

The dramatic changes in international relations resulting from the ending of the cold war must necessarily extend to all regions of the world. If the rivalry between the great Powers has indeed ended, it must follow that the favourable developments in the international political scene enhancing peace, security and cooperation should have a positive impact on the Indian Ocean region as well.

The Charter of the United Nations provides specifically for regional arrangements for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action. Together with six other South Asian nations, Sri Lanka has the honour to belong to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which is making remarkable progress on several programmes of common interest. These are intended not only to enhance the living standards of the people of our region but also to contribute to world peace and progress. Sri Lanka has the honour and the distinction of hosting the sixth Summit Conference of SAARC in November of this year.

We welcome the trends towards the solution of a number of conflicts in different parts of the world in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. In many of these conflicts the efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General have helped to bring about favourable developments. We urge the continuation of such efforts.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

The preservation of Afghanistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence is essential to a peaceful solution of the Afghanistan problem. We are confident that the five-point peace plan proposed by the Secretary-General would help to end this conflict soon.

We are glad that the conflict in Cambodia has almost come to an end. Sri Lanka welcomes the recent peace agreement reached under the United Nations peace accord by the Phnom Penh Government and the three Cambodian guerrilla factions.

With regard to the situation in Cyprus, Sri Lanka appeals to all parties concerned to engage in meaningful discussions in order to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. In this context, my delegation extends its fullest support and cooperation for an international conference under the guidance of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

The United Nations should work towards the total eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic society guaranteeing the fundamental freedoms and human rights of all the people of South Africa.

(Mr. Kalpage, Sri Lanka)

We support all efforts to solve the problems associated with the violence and insecurity prevailing in the Middle East. We reiterate that a comprehensive solution to these problems is possible only with the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the withdrawal of Israel from occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. Only this can ensure the security of all States in the Middle East within secure and internationally recognized borders.

We stand on the threshold of an emerging international order. It is a matter for satisfaction and hope that all Member States are eager to participate in the endeavours of this Organization recognizing the central place of the United Nations in the international system.

As it nears the end of its fifth decade, the United Nations has won universal recognition for its untiring efforts in the promotion of global peace and development. It remains the only organization which embraces all humankind. Nations and peoples who wish for, and are committed to, the amelioration of planet Earth have no other alternative. It is in this spirit, renewed and refreshed by encouraging recent developments, that we must continue the work entrusted to us in this Assembly. The opportunity for achievement is within our reach. Let it not once again slip from our grasp.

Mr. VAN DUNEM (Angola) (spoke in Portuguese; official English text furnished by the delegation): Allow me first to congratulate Mr. Shihabi on his election to the presidency of this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly and to join preceding speakers, to wish him every success in conducting this session of the United Nations General Assembly. We realize how difficult a task it is but we have confidence in his experience and diplomatic skills and his personal commitment and wise judgement will

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certainly help him lead this session successfully. I would like to extend my congratulations also to those others who were elected at this Assembly. We are certain that their valuable support will ensure success in the work that we are going to be doing here. Allow me, therefore, to convey to Mr. Shihabi, on behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of Angola and on my own behalf, the total confidence we have in his presidency and to pledge the total support and cooperation of our delegation.

It is also a great honour for me to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his enlightened leadership of this Organization in the course of his two terms of office. In fact, it is with a sense of pride and achievement that we have witnessed during this time the settlement of some of the most serious conflicts that seemed to be going to last indefinitely. I am referring specifically to the colonial situation that prevailed in Zimbabwe and in Namibia until recently, to the Iran-Iraq conflict and to the efforts undertaken to solve the Sahraoui question, among others. In fact, the Secretary-General's determination and personal commitment contributed a great deal to their settlement, thus allowing for the restoration of justice, peace and security to those territories.

May I also extend my warmest congratulations to the newest Members of the Organization, the Baltic States of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, Micronesia and the two brotherly countries of North Korea and South Korea.

The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly is taking place at a time of extreme importance for the history of mankind, as the world situation is evolving towards détente in international relations - this is in spite of the considerable difficulties that remain to be overcome, most of which arise from the obstinate attitude of certain segments of society who are reluctant to

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accept the positive steps that have been made in order to establish a sound climate of understanding among people on this planet, conducive to the kind of relations that reflect the lofty aspirations of peace, freedom, justice and social welfare.

We believe, however, that common sense will motivate people to re-examine their obsolete positions, if they find themselves unable to adjust to the relentless and irreversible progress made in contemporary history.

As a matter of fact, the détente that characterizes international relations today was an important factor in the major steps made towards the settlement of the main problems afflicting the world community, thanks to the efforts undertaken in recent years that allowed the cold war to give way to dialogue and the use of force to be replaced by the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

The recent signing of the START Treaty between the United States of America and the Soviet Union after talks lasting for nine years is clear evidence that through negotiation people can in fact arrive at an understanding, remove obstacles and eliminate impending threats that may be catastrophic to the future of humankind - all without resorting to force.

However, in order to reach such an understanding it is imperative that foreign interests do not prevail over the interests of a nation and its people. We firmly believe that strict compliance with this principle would enable the warring parties to reflect on their differences and to arrive at a settlement, thus avoiding military confrontation and the inevitable catastrophic consequences, as was the case in the recent Persian Gulf war where thousands of innocent civilians fell victim to massacre.

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

For that reason my Government heartily applauds this gesture of mutual understanding and trust by the two super-Powers, a significant step forward on the road before us, which is still a long one, and urges both of them, as well as all the armament-producing countries, to continue to implement the necessary measures so that in the near future we can arrive at general and complete disarmament on the planet. This is the ultimate aspiration of the whole of mankind, which yearns for unrestricted freedom, peace and tranquillity.

The Angolan Government attaches great importance to the positive political developments in southern Africa. In Angola, with the signing of the peace agreements between the Government and UNITA, on 31 May 1991, in Bicesse, Portugal, the peace process in the sub-Saharan region of Africa continued its course.

For the Angolan people the coming of peace as a result of the above-mentioned agreement constitutes undoubtedly one of the most remarkable events in contemporary history since 1961 and the beginning of the struggle for national liberation against colonialism followed by our country's accession to independence in 1975 and the ensuing foreign aggression and internal conflict it endured.

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

The revision of our constitutional law, effected even before the signing of the peace agreements, as well as the adoption of new legislation consistent with the revised Constitution, created conditions conducive to the setting up of mechanisms that will facilitate the scheduled multi-party elections and the establishment of the rule of law in Angola. This will open the doors to broader prospects for the full exercise of democracy in the new society to whose creation all national forces, political and other, will contribute.

This achievement of the Angolan people will inevitably have a positive impact on the entire subregion, as it will give a new dynamic dimension to the economic activities of all the members of the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference. We believe that this success will create an environment of greater openness and trust in our relations with other countries and entities that want to do business with us.

The Angolan people and Government are open to all initiatives that might contribute further to what has already been achieved in our country and promote greater development. It is essential, however, that this optimistic and irreversible journey that the Angolan people are ready to undertake, voluntarily and on their own initiative, not be thwarted or disrupted in any way by alien forces, either inside or outside the country.

I should like to take this opportunity to express once again the appreciation and gratitude of the Angolan people and the Angolan Government to the Portuguese Government for its dedicated commitment and for its mediation efforts to find a solution to the Angolan conflict. These culminated in the signing of the agreement that restored tranquillity to my country.

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

I extend my acknowledgements to the Governments of the United States of America and of the Soviet Union, as well as to the United Nations Secretary-General, whose representatives played an invaluable role as observers at the talks.

Finally, the Angolan and Cuban Governments should be given credit for the major role they played in the peace process. Angola and Cuba adhered strictly to their commitment to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angolan territory. This process was completed by 15 July 1991 - ahead of the schedule that had been agreed upon - as a gesture of good will on the part of the two Governments.

In addition to the peace process in Angola, which I have just described as a very important historical event, another event constituted a landmark for the southern region of Africa. I refer to the abolition by the South African Government of the last set of laws that upheld and sustained the apartheid system. However, the acts of violence that constantly occur in South African townships create a climate of instability that is an aberrant contradiction of the climate of hope created with the abolition of the apartheid laws. It is therefore crucial that the South African Government adopt the appropriate measures to put an end to this situation.

In spite of the repeal of the apartheid laws, not all questions related to the continued existence of this political regime have been resolved. For example, there is the question of the release of all political prisoners, and the established authorities continue to make mass, arbitrary arrests. This situation is in every way similar to that prevailing under the old regime.

It is imperative that there should be created a constituent assembly including all patriotic representative groups in South Africa. This assembly

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would draft the new constitution. An interim government must be formed to administer the country during the transition period, until free and fair elections are held on a basis of one man, one vote.

For all those reasons, my Government considers as premature the total lifting of sanctions against South Africa favoured by some Governments.

I should like to comment now on the situation in Mozambique. The efforts made by the Government of that country to achieve peace have been constantly frustrated by foreign interference, which hurts the legitimate interests of the Mozambican people. The Angolan people pledge solidarity with the brotherly people of Mozambique, and my Government encourages the Mozambican Government to persevere in its peace efforts by holding direct negotiations with RENAMO, and urges the international community to refrain from any action that might slow down the negotiations or misrepresent their results.

On the other hand, one sovereignty issue in southern Africa remains to be resolved. I refer to the Walvis Bay Port Territory, which has been recognized in various General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as an integral part of Namibia.

The People's Republic of Angola has been following closely the political developments in different parts of the globe.

Indonesia's illegal occupation of the Territory of East Timor persists, in violation of internationally accepted rules and principles of international law, and in disregard of the rights and legitimate interests of the Timorese people. The Angolan people and Government pledge their solidarity with the people of East Timor in their just struggle for national independence. We are in favour of talks between Portugal, as the administrating Power overseeing

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the Territory, and Indonesia, without excluding the physical presence of representatives of East Timor as a direct and concerned party, so that a fair and comprehensive solution may be found - a solution that takes into account, above all, the legitimate interests and rights of the Maubere people.

In the Middle East, the prospects for a speedy solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict are discouraging. In our view, the Jewish settlements in occupied Arab territories tend to worsen the conflict rather than contributing in any way to its solution.

In the Angolan Government's view, it is crucial that an international conference on the Middle East be urgently convened to bring together all parties involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization - an honourable representative of the Palestinian people, which has been fighting for decades for the right to self-determination.

We cannot fail to refer, however briefly, to the more effervescent political situations in other regions today.

As regards Africa, we reaffirm the right of the peoples in this region to decide their future freely, without foreign interference in the shape of the formation of, or support for, insurgent armed groups, through direct military intervention, or by any other means.

In Latin America, interventionist policies, aggression, economic embargoes and interference in the internal affairs and against the interests of another State continue to be a strong threat to the sovereignty of nations in the region, as well as to peace and international security. Such conduct is increasingly in sharp contrast to the growing tendency to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts.

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

The People's Republic of Angola welcomes all initiatives towards the reunification of Korea and the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Korean peninsula. Proposals for the reunification of Korea must be considered positively, as they can be of great significance for the Korean people and for the peninsula as a whole.

The Angolan Government cannot remain indifferent to world economic problems. This is especially so in view of Angola's position in Africa, which is one of the most impoverished regions of the world. In the early 1980s Angola joined other nations in their firm commitment to improve the world economic environment, and, together, help to overcome hunger, poverty, malnutrition and disease epidemics and eliminate illiteracy, and to solve problems inherent in underdevelopment, in order that people might be offered a more dignified life.

But as we look at the world economic situation today we realize that, in spite of the efforts undertaken by the international community, it has not been possible so far to solve the problems that affect mainly the developing countries. This was the conclusion drawn at the eighth special session of the General Assembly, held last year, which was devoted to international economic cooperation, and particularly to the re-examination of economic growth and development.

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

In fact, instead of better balance between the development of the richer countries and that of poorer countries, we are seeing a growing tendency towards polarization. One example would be that in international trade relations protectionist policies are still being used by the developed countries. The price of raw material exports is constantly declining, and trade conditions continue to deteriorate, undermining efforts by the developing countries to restructure their economies.

Another factor that constitutes a major obstacle to the economic and social development of developing countries is their foreign debt. We believe that the developing countries, which are the debtors, and the developed countries, which are the creditors, should make use of the available mechanisms and take measures to put an end to the wasting of resources that we see in the developing countries. This point was recently acknowledged at a ministerial-level meeting of non-aligned countries in Accra.

We are, nevertheless, convinced that, if the strategy for international development for the Fourth United Nations Decade for Development, adopted at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, is implemented, many problems will be more easily solved.

As we have already mentioned, Africa is the most impoverished continent on our planet, in spite of the vast natural resources with which it is endowed. In fact the constant deterioration of the economic situation in most African countries, caused by losses in export revenues, either because of the staggering costs of imports or because of their serious foreign debt, which has reached more than $270 billion, is a reason for our Governments to feel concerned, because it constitutes a new factor conducive to political and social instability.

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

A few days ago the United Nations evaluated its Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, which was adopted approximately five years ago. As we can see, the results are not very encouraging. The international community should give more support towards the effective implementation of this Programme, because otherwise the African countries will not be able to deal with the crisis that is eroding the continent. The situation is further worsened by the significant changes that have taken place in political and economic relations, with particular relevance to the developments in Eastern Europe.

As regards the economic situation in southern Africa, we are hopeful that the ending of the war in Angola and Mozambique and the complete abolition of apartheid in South Africa will open new and broad prospects for economic development for the benefit of countries in the subregion, through the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Taking this objective into account, its member countries are relying increasingly on the support of the international community; this support can be an invaluable contribution to the solution of social problems afflicting the people in the subregion.

In December 1989 the United Nations adoped resolution 44/168, on international assistance for the economic recovery of Angola. For the reasons stated at the time, it has not yet been possible to implement it effectively. We believe, however, that, given the present conditions in our country, it is now possible to implement it more expeditiously. We believe that the donor countries, which have been somewhat apprehensive in the past, can now be reassured.

(Mr. Van Dunem, Angola)

We should like once again to thank the Member States that in one way or another have helped us, and we appeal to them to maintain a firm commitment to the continuance of assistance to the People's Republic of Angola.

The meeting rose at 6.45 p.m.